

# LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Post-Katrina Planning Includes Lessons Learned after 9/11**

#### ***LED Hosts New York Development Officials to Discuss Local Economic Recovery***

**September 23, 2005 – Baton Rouge -** Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Michael Olivier recently hosted officials from Empire State Development, New York State's department of economic development, to discuss the revitalization of areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

After talks with Secretary Olivier and Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu, Empire State Development Chairman Charles A. Gargano dispatched a four-member delegation from Albany and New York City to Baton Rouge to offer pro-bono assistance in the planning and rebuilding process. "The situation on the Gulf Coast is overwhelming. After seeing and hearing about the damage in the national media, we knew we had to do something to help," said Empire State Development COO Eileen Mildenerger, who led the delegation.

"After 9/11, approximately 50,000 businesses were dislocated. What you are facing here far exceeds that number," said Mildenerger. "It is encouraging to see the progress already made. There is so much hope for future rebuilding for this great region, making it better and stronger than it was before."

Progress on the visit was reported to Chairman Gargano, currently on a trade mission in China with New York Governor George Pataki.

"We appreciate the counsel of our friends from New York and will access their knowledge and experience as we continue a long and challenging recovery process," said Secretary Olivier.

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The discussion focused on the importance of a coordinated effort among all levels of government and the private sector. Empire State Development led New York City's rebuilding efforts and provided accountability for federal funds entrusted to the state. New York officials noted that time to design and plan an effective recovery program is crucial for success. Their plans and recovery programs were not established until four months after the terrorist attacks, a timeline that needs to be shorter for the Gulf Coast region.

New York's programs were designed with input from all sectors, and included residential, commercial and infrastructure initiatives. Zones were identified within the affected region based on the severity of the economic impact to establish a uniform process for aid distribution.

Among the programs established was the Business Recovery Grant (BRG) program, providing grants to businesses and nonprofit organizations with fewer than 500 employees, to compensate them for economic losses resulting from the disaster, thereby retaining thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

Efforts also focused on creating a "24/7" economy, including incentives to return displaced residents and businesses to the area, while attracting new ones. Enticements, such as cultural attractions and quality schools, have led to an increase in the number of residents in Lower Manhattan.

During this visit, the Empire State Development team also met with economic development officials from affected parishes, members of Governor Blanco's staff and representatives from the trade associations, groups and agencies representing the Travel, Tourism, Culture and Convention industries. "They have offered to return and continue providing their expertise in support of the Katrina economic relief effort," said Olivier.

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*The mission of Louisiana Economic Development is to provide excellence in leadership, policy and programs to create a business climate enabling public-private linkages, which result in capital investment, a diversified economic base and quality job opportunities for all Louisiana citizens.*